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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000454

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/ERA AND EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2014

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SUBJECT: EU CONVENTION VICE PRESIDENT AMATO ON
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION PROGRESS

CLASSIFIED BY: A/DCM SCOTT KILNER. REASON:1.5 (B)(D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: ON FEBRUARY 3, EU CONVENTION VICE PRESIDENT GIULIANO AMATO TOLD AMBASSADOR SEMBLER THAT WHILE HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE CHANCES OF APPROVING A CONSTITUTION BEFORE FORMAL ENLARGEMENT, MUCH WORK REMAINED. IT WAS STILL POSSIBLE THAT THE CONVENTION COULD HAVE A PRODUCT READY TO PRESENT TO THE JUNE COUNCIL IN THESSALONIKI, AND THAT THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE (IGC) COULD THEREFORE BEGIN IN TIME TO HAVE A DOCUMENT READY FOR SIGNATURE DURING THE ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY. AMATO'S GOAL IS TO SIMPLIFY THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EU. FOREIGN ENTITIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, SHOULD BE ABLE TO INTERACT WITH A SINGLE EU FOREIGN MINISTER. WITH RESPECT TO AN EU "PRESIDENT," AMATO SUGGESTED A "COHABITATION OF COUNCIL AND COMMISSION PRESIDENTS UNTIL 2015," ALLOWING TIME FOR THE EU TO PHASE IN A SINGLE "EXECUTIVE." HE SAID THAT THE CONVENTION IS CONSIDERING A "DUAL MAJORITY" APPROACH (BOTH STATES AND POPULATION) FOR APPROVING LEGISLATION. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS POST-ENLARGEMENT MAY HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED THROUGH SOME TYPE OF EU "OWN RESOURCES" TAX TO BE COLLECTED DIRECTLY BY BRUSSELS. END SUMMARY

2. (C) AMBASSADOR SEMBLER, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A/DCM AND POLOFF (NOTETAKER), CONGRATULATED AMATO FOR THE CONVENTION'S PROGRESS THUS FAR. HE ASKED AMATO WHETHER IT WAS ON COURSE TO PRODUCE A DOCUMENT READY FOR SIGNATURE BY HEADS OF STATE BY THE END OF 2003, ONE OF PM BERLUSCONI'S TOP PRIORITIES FOR ITALY'S JULY-DECEMBER EU PRESIDENCY. AMATO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CONVENTION HAS REACHED CONSENSUS ON SOME TECHNICAL CHANGES, SUCH AS GIVING THE EU A SINGLE LEGAL PERSONALITY. HOWEVER, AT THE NEXT PLENARY AT THE END OF FEBRUARY, THE DELEGATES WILL BEGIN TO WRESTLE WITH SOME OF THE MORE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, INCLUDING OPTIONS TO ABOLISH THE SIX-MONTH ROTATING PRESIDENCY. THERE WAS HARD WORK AHEAD TO RECONCILE THOSE MEMBER STATES WHO WANT TO KEEP THE EU AS A "JOINT VENTURE," AND THOSE WHO WANT A "MERGER."

3. (C) THE SIZE OF THE CONVENTION ITSELF IS ALSO A FACTOR, AMATO CONTINUED. IN THEORY, THE CONVENTION WAS TO BE COMPRISED OF ABOUT 100 DELEGATES PLUS ALTERNATES. IN FACT, ALTERNATE AND DELEGATE PARTICIPATION IS INDISTINGUISHABLE. WHILE THE TEN ASPIRANT COUNTRIES HAVE OBSERVER STATUS, AND THEREFORE DO NOT VOTE, THEY PARTICIPATE IN DEBATE IN THE SAME MANNER AS FULL MEMBERS. THE RESULT IS A CONVENTION OF OVER 200 MEMBERS, WHICH NATURALLY SLOWS DOWN PROCEDURES.

4. (C) AMATO SAID IT WAS STILL POSSIBLE THAT THE CONVENTION COULD HAVE A PRODUCT READY TO PRESENT TO THE JUNE COUNCIL IN THESSALONIKI, AND THAT THE IGC COULD THEREFORE BEGIN IN TIME TO HAVE A DOCUMENT READY FOR SIGNATURE DURING THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY. BUT WITH AN UNDERTAKING THIS COMPLEX, THERE WERE MANY CONTINGENCIES THAT COULD AFFECT TIMING. BESIDES, CONTINUED AMATO IN AN ASIDE, CONVENTION PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING "LIKES HIS JOB." THERE WERE SOME MEMBERS, ESPECIALLY "NORTHERN COUNTRIES" WHO WANTED A COOLING OFF PERIOD BETWEEN THE CONVENTION AND IGC.

5. (C) FOR AMATO, ANY DELAY THAT WOULD PUSH THE IGC INTO THE IRISH PRESIDENCY WAS TROUBLING. "FOR THE SAKE OF EUROPE, THE IGC MUST BE COMPLETED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION IS PRESENTED TO MEMBER STATES" WITH MINIMAL DEBATE BETWEEN. OTHERWISE, IT WILL BE "AN OVERCOOKED MEAL" AND THE MOMENTUM COMING OUT OF THE CONVENTION WILL BE LOST. THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS IN 2004, SUCH AS EU PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND A NEW COMMISSION, WHICH WILL DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM THESE IMPORTANT REFORM ISSUES.

6. (C) AMATO HOPED THA ASPIRANT MEMBERS WOULD PARTICIPATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, "WITH SOME AMBIGUITY" AS NON-VOTING MEMBERS IN THE IGC. HE DREW COMPARISONS TO 1985/86, WHEN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL PARTICIPATED "ALMOST AS FULL MEMBERS" IN THE DEBATE ON THE SINGLE ACT, THEN SIGNED THE TREATY AFTER THEIR FORMAL ENTRY INTO THE EU. ACCORDING TO AMATO, THE POLES LOOK FAVORABLY ON SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT.

7. (C) AMATO'S GOAL IS TO SIMPLIFY THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EU, DEVELOPED INCREMENTALLY OVER 50 YEARS, TREATY UPON TREATY, EACH WITH ITS OWN "JUNGLE" OF BUREAUCRATIC INSTRUMENTS. FOREIGN ENTITIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, SHOULD BE ABLE TO INTERACT WITH A SINGLE PERSONALITY AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE EU. AMATO

ENVISAGES AN EVENTUAL MERGER OF THE CFSP HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
(SOLANA) AND COMMISSION EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSIONER
(PATTEN) POSITIONS, INTO A SINGLE "DOUBLE-HATTED" EU FOREIGN
MINISTER. THE PRESIDENCY WILL BE A TRICKIER ISSUE. AMATO

ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EAP-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-01	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/004W	

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8007
INFO EU CANDIDATE STATES COLLECTIVE
EU INTEREST COLLECTIVE
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES